

JOE WARDY
MAYOR



CITY COUNCIL

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DISTRICT NO. 2

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DISTRICT NO. 6

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DISTRICT NO. 7

ANTHONY W. COBOS
DISTRICT NO. 8

SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
AND THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT
COUNTY COURTHOUSE, THIRD FLOOR
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2003
3:00 P.M. OR IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING
THE BUDGET HEARING FOR CITY-COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT
SCHEDULED AT 2:00 P.M.

The City Council met at the above place and date at approximately 3:45 p.m. Mayor Joe Wardy present and presiding and the following Council Members answered roll call: Susan Austin, Robert A. Cushing, Jr., Jose Alexandro Lozano, John F. Cook, Daniel S. Power, Vivian Rojas, and Anthony Cobos. Absent: Council Member Paul J. Escobar. County Judge Dolores Briones and County Commissioners Charles L. Scruggs, Betti Flores, Miguel A. Teran and Daniel R. Haggerty present.

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AGENDA

Discussion on the Arena Project.

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Commissioner Haggerty stated that he believes this is a Quality of Life issue and should be run by the City. The County can assist. He gave the particulars on what the County did when the voters turned down the bond issue and stated that the City would have to select a location, size, etc.

Representative Power stated that he liked what the County did and would like the City to assist on the proposal and the County to lead due to the experience acquired.

Commissioner Flores stated that she would like to keep the arena project with the County and enter into a joint venture with the City. She stated that the community does want an arena and that she supports the location next to Cohen Stadium.

Commissioner Scruggs expressed his support of the arena project and the reason for the failure of the bond issue.

Representative Cook stated that the arena project would not work without the City, County and the private sector participating.

Commissioner Scruggs questioned what the plan is to involve the private sector.

Mayor Wardy stated that any company in the private sector would be a fool to invest in a project that would never pay for itself because this is not a money maker project, this is a quality of life project similar to the Civic Center where the taxpayers pay for it for the benefit of the community. In addition, the public sector would want to control the arena. He gave an example where the City of Chicago contracted with a private company to assess the community's needs and wants. It turned out to be a success.

Commissioner Scruggs agreed with the idea of contracting a company that would do more community and project assessment.

Mayor Wardy suggested contacting the City of Chicago to ask about their costs and for more information of the assessment.

Judge Briones stated that there is no local assessment company.

Representative Austin commented that she understood that when the voters voted for the bond issue, the arena was going to pay for itself.

Commissioner Haggerty explained that they were optimistic about designing, building and operating an arena that once built, would not require putting in any money.

Commissioner Scruggs stated that they need to work on what the County already did and let the business and industry determine the size.

Representative Austin suggested that the City and County come up with proposals.

Commissioner Teran expressed his concern on where the money to contract an assessment company and to design, build and operate an arena would be coming from. He explained the County's shortfall in the budget.

Commissioner Scruggs suggested that the RFQ should ask for capital contribution and include the locations in it. He also commented on the County's failure to contact the City sooner when planning the arena project.

Commissioner Haggerty suggested starting off with site and size of the arena.

Ms. Lee Shapleigh, County Attorney's Office, explained the RFP's ranking process and negotiations which included the total risk for the cost of operating and the responsibility for capital improvements. She recommended that in the future, the RFP needs to be for Operator Manager and let the company suggest and analyze the site, location, movable seats, etc.; let the company do the studies.

Representative Austin questioned whether the City pays a fee to SMG or does SMG pay the City for the Civic Center.

Mayor Wardy explained that the voters pay for the Civic Center but that the City pays an outside management company, SMG, to manage it due to the City's failure to do so successfully.

Commissioner Scruggs stated that there is a revenue motive behind managing companies but that they put money back into the facility. It is the management company's expertise, and they offer something they know they can sell.

Commissioner Teran explained that the County only held RFP negotiations with one firm.

Mayor Wardy reiterated the need for a firm to study the dynamics of the community.

Representative Power suggested that the City and County then work together in every possible way and share the cost for a community assessment study.

Representative Austin suggested that the arena project needs to be put out as a quality of life project and not based on location.

Commissioner Scruggs stated that the location should be where it has the smallest economic impact.

Commissioner Scruggs recommended designating two City Representatives and two County Commissioners to coordinate and partner up for the arena project.

Representative Lozano commented that the arena project is not for making money but for facilitating to the community. He suggested that the City and County join forces on tourism; otherwise, there will be no venues for promoting the arena; join forces now to promote the Civic Center and the Coliseum.

Commissioner Scruggs agreed with Representative Lozano's suggestions on joining forces on tourism.

Commissioner Teran stated that there must be commitment from both bodies on the cost of the assessment study.

Motion made by Cook, seconded by Representative Lozano and unanimously carried to adjourn this meeting at 4:30 p.m.

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Richarda Duffy Momsen, City Clerk



Lisa A. Elizondo, City Attorney